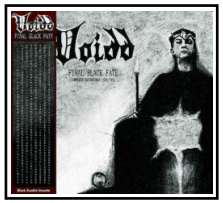
VOIDD – Final Black Fate Complete Recordings: 1990–1992 CD



An extensive anthology that gives us viciously executed raw metal punk with crust, sickening thrash, and merciless grindcore. A Nagoya, Japan project started in 1989, this LP combines their early recordings until 1992, a point where the band started to explore other sounds and cadences. Darkened thrash with heavy, steady tempos is combined with flaming riffage on behalf of the guitars, plus maniac vocals that go from guttural pig to cavernous, deep madman. Highly recommended for the dis-lovers, but also thrash maniacs and crust-associated people. I personally recommend the first set named *Premonitory Inscription Demo 1*, compiled from their very first recording in 1990. Fire and thrash!

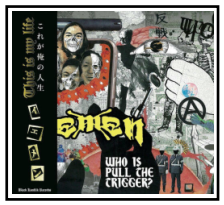
Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Black Konflik

WET DREAM WAR MACHINE – I.M.A.G.I.N.E. 12″

Now this record is something of an unidentified aural assault, and even after the second listen, I am struggling a little to describe what Berlin's WET DREAM WAR MACHINE is on about, but then I am a simple punk used to simple music so I could be too thick to get it. A lot of different things coexist in their music, from direct, snotty hardcore punk to more dissonant post-punk moments, beefy noise rock, and an overall strange atmosphere of dementia and alienation. The band's name comes from a song from the LOCUST, which makes sense. The record has an agitprop feel (even visually), and there are moments that reminded me of political bands that strove to break down boundaries and used sarcasm and wits to get the point across, like the EX or CCCP, for instance. Maybe an insane and mean version of a noisier STRAW MAN ARMY? While undeniably interesting, I cannot say I really enjoyed the clearly thought-out and articulate experience. The tone of the vocals reminds me of black metal somehow, and it tends to be irritating with the erratic and nervous, versatile songwriting. I recognize the quality and value of *I.M.A.G.I.N.E.* but I am unable to relate to it. The hooks don't hook me. I am convinced this lot must be brilliant live, though.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Abnegat

YEMEN – Who is Pull the Trigger? CD



YEMEN is a band that features members of GOUKA, and what we get from them is some Swedish-style D-beat in the vein of ANTI-CIMEX or DISARM. Tough and thick guitar sound with some chaos thrown in just to get it right. Good stuff. Black Konflik continually puts out good crust and D-beat releases, often CD or cassette versions of records. I'm a fan.

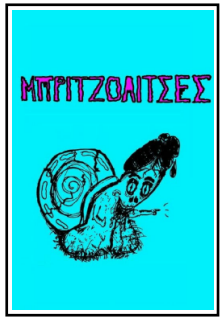
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Black Konflik

ZONE TROOPER – Zone Trooper LP

The self-titled album by ZONE TROOPER from Portland, Oregon is excellent. DIY-style rock'n'roll that explores '80s metal and prog rock. A very "western" aesthetic is dealt with the intro song and seems to return sporadically as the band explores their sonic range. Fans of MOTÖRHEAD and IRON MAIDEN will for sure like tracks like "Steel Horse War" and the closer "Snowy Peaks." The more progressive, ambient elements remind me most of EARTH. ZONE TROOPER is definitely not for the pogo crowd, but if you're into experimental, riff-heavy rock, then absolutely take a shot.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Black Water

ΜΠΡΙΤΖΟΛΙΤΣΕΣ – Αισχοσ Ντροπη cassette



This is some ripping weirdo punk from Greece, something I do not come across daily. These songs do not let up, often anchored by breathless drums that have punk energy and a German psych precision and mobility. When the band strays from their formula of angular, anarchic lo-fi punk, the rewards dwindle, such as on the too-zany cut "Love Your Baby/Moron." But overall, this is a group that plays serious without taking itself too seriously. The results are enough to make your brain wiggle.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: XTRO

THE *COUNTER*FORCE

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #498

NOVEMBER 2024

In this issue:

• 3 THE HARDWAY • ABERRANT KINGDOM • ABUSEMENTS • ADRESTIA • AMASS • AMERICAN MUSCLE • ANGEL FACE • ANTI–SYSTEM • AUTOBAHNS • BAD YEAR • BEIGE BANQUET • BEROSSZULÁS • BIG DOG • BINGO CRÉPUSUCULE • BAND OF BASTARDS • BLACK MERCY • BLU ANXXIETY • BOTTLED VIOLENT • BOUNCE HOUSE • BRASS LIP • BUMBO'S TINTO BRASS BAND • BZDET • CARNAGE ASADA • CHAIN CULT • CLOSETALKERS • CROSSED WIRES • D.B.R. • DEAD STREET DREAMERS • DESORDEN • DIE IN VAIN • DIE VERLIERER • ENDFORM • ERIK NERVOUS • EVIL SPIRIT • FAKE LAST NAME • FARSA • FAUX DÉPART • FENTANYL • GERM BOMB • GLANDS • GLORIOUS WOUNDS • GROIND • GUERRA FINAL • HALF HUMAN • HARD PASS • HITS • HOMEMADE SPEED • HOSPITAL TERRORIZER • INDIKATOR B • JUPITER HEARTS • KORIDOR • LEAKING HEAD • LUXURY TEETH • MALAKILI • MAN–EATERS • MARIA T–TA Y EL EMPUJÓN BRUTAL • COMPLETED EXPOSITION • MAXXPOWER • MENSTRUAL CYCLES • NASTI • NERVOUS TICK AND THE ZIPPER LIPS • NO KNOCK • NOX NOVACULA • PAT TODD & THE RANKOUTSIDERS • PERMANENT RESIDUE • PET COP • POISON IDEA • RENKORE • RÉSILIENCE • RHIZOME AND THE FLAVONOIDS • RICHARD HAMILTON • RISSE IN DER WAND • RIXE • GRIMLY FORMING • ROLEX • ROUGE SANG • RUGH • SABOTAGE • SATANIC TOGAS • SENSOR GHOST • SILICON HEARTBEAT • SKEET • MIDDLE • SLAMMING AVOID NUTS • SLAN • SOFT KILL • SOME KIND OF NIGHTMARE • SOUP ACTIVISTS • SQUID PISSER • STILL ANIMALS • THE CARP • THE DUMPIES • THE INTIMA • THE OKMONIKS • THE PROLES • THE STEMS • THE STIFFS • THE ZEROS • TIGER 54 • URBAN MISERY • V/A • VOIDD • WET DREAM WAR MACHINE • YEMEN • ZONE TROOPER • ΜΠΡΙΤΖΟΛΙΤΣΕΣ •

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

This is an **unofficial** zine digest of MRR 498, first published November 2024. You can read it online at:
https://www.maximumrocknroll.com/review/issues/mrr-498/

"For review consideration: please send vinyl (preferred), CD, or cassette releases to MRR, PO Box 3852, Oakland, CA 94609, USA. Maximum Rocknroll wants to review everything that comes out in the world of underground punk rock, hardcore, garage, post-punk, thrash, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-owned distributors, no reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork. Please include contact information and let us know where your band is from!"

E-mail MRR: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com
More MRR content online at https://www.maximumrocknroll.com

This issue contains 107 reviews, contributed by:

Emma Miller
Willis Schenk
Jake Joyce
Romain Basset
Matt Casteel
Alex Howell
Johnny Leach
Seth McBurney
Neal Ray
Ben Marshall
Katy Otto
João Seixas
Eric Anderson
Luke Henley
Nick Odorizzi
D. Gregory
Kenny Kaos
Gonza Perez
Erika Elizabeth
Biff Bifaro
Jason Harding
Bill Chamberlain
Jeff Cost
Tim Janchar

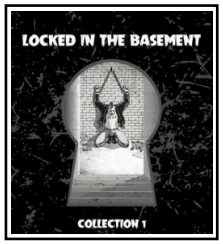
THE COUNTERFORCE

This zine digest was compiled and laid out by The Counterforce.

E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net
Visit https://the-counterforce.org/zines to get printable PDFs of this zine, and other zines.

Print It Yourself.

V/A – Locked in the Basement, Collection 1 LP



Locked in the Basement: Collection 1 is a gritty vinyl compilation that rips through 20 tracks from 20 underground bands in Bethlehem, PA and the surrounding area's scenes. Born out of the pandemic and fueled by DIY ethos, this project is raw to the bone. The recordings are rough and unapologetic, capturing everything from crust to street punk, post-punk, and grindcore—so don't expect polish, but get ready for a jolt of unfiltered energy. Standout cuts from ONE SIDED, ALEMENT, CHISELED LILLIES, RA!D, BRAZEN HELL, and PALE FANG tear through the noise, proving this collection isn't about perfection, it's about power. Pressed on blood-red vinyl with black splatters, the album also includes a booklet packed with fun stories from the bands' sessions. Recommended for people who give no shits about recording quality and are interested in checking out what seems to be kind of a cool document of the bands playing in and around this scene since 2020.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: DCxPC

V/A – No Occupation: Another Benefit for Mutual Aid in Gaza cassette

I hate that I have to review this release. Or rather, I hate that this release has to exist. In a non-broken world, the people who have the power to stop a genocide—in this case the US government—would. They'd see the thousands upon thousands of innocent Palestinians being slaughtered, or the umpteenth hospital being bombed to dust, and go, "OK, that's way more than enough!" Of course, we don't live in that world. The world we live in asks us which of the two US presidential candidates loudly pledging fealty to Israel we prefer: the one who thinks the other side of the mouth should be reserved for shouting "finish the job," or the one who thinks it should be reserved for uttering passively phrased lip service to the victims of the bombings that are within their power to stop. Now it's up to regular-ass people with minimal resources to step up and work extremely hard to do something, anything, to somewhat mitigate this disaster. In this instance, it's punks behind the band the DISSIDENTS, and they're assembling a cassette compilation—the second of three so far—to raise money to send to Gaza Soup Kitchen. It's sixteen tracks in all, featuring contributions from a slew of the best bands going these days, including ALIEN NOSEJOB, COLLATE, PRISON AFFAIR, SOUP ACTIVISTS, TIIKERI, and new Philly band ERASER, who I think provide the highlight of the release. I'd probably tell you to buy this even if it sucked. It doesn't, though—it's great! I just wish it didn't exist. Free Palestine!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Symphony of Destruction

V/A – No Planet, No Future cassette

Three-band "demo tape comp" from Whitfield, NJ, a small, young scene of bands allegedly surrounded by the elderly in their hometown. Released by Almost Records, which is run by one of the members of NATURE BOYS, these tapes are re-dubbed over secondhand cassettes. The biggest annoyance of the release is that the cassette is very long and there is a ton of dead space on both sides, which could have easily had all the comp tracks on each side. Well, that should be the biggest annoyance. *My* big gripe is that the glued-down paper label from one of the sides of the tape peeled off while playing and clogged up the guts of my van's tape deck, causing it to stop working while I was attempting to fast forward through the dead space at the end of one of the sides. No internet presence for any of the bands or for the label, so good luck tracking down a copy for yourself. Onto the music: ANGRY YOUNG MEN live up to their name with the titular track on the compilation. Youthful, energetic, passionate hardcore singing about being young and angry. HEARTCORE rips through the shortest song on the tape. Short, angry, mid-tempo hardcore. NATURE BOYS provide two songs on the comp. Very slick, professionally recorded pop punk. Catchy songs, but I could personally do without the BLINK-182 auto-tuned vocal effects.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Almost

V/A – Thesaurus, Vol. 7 2xLP

Cameleon continues to dive deep into rare and/or unreleased French tunes and share their spoils with the world. Here we're treated to 30 such tracks from 25 different artists, all originally recorded between 1978 and 1986. As you might expect, there is a big variety to digest here, and while not every track is an absolute highlight, all are at least pretty good or interesting. The comp starts with a few straightforward punk numbers, veers into some great post-punk moments, and even throws in a live cover of the RINGS' "I Wanna Be Free." It feels silly to dig into specific bands and songs when there are so many on the comp, but a big standout for me was "Pay The Bill" by MOKOS—a fantastic track with tinges of power pop all over the sub-two-minute runtime. The songs seem fairly split down the middle between being sung in English and in French, which also helps keep things fresh when presented with so many tracks. Cameleon often reinforces their strength one rescued 7" at a time, but this comp serves as a pleasant reminder that they can please at length just as easily.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Cameleon

THE ZEROS – Beat Your Heart Out / Wild Weekend 7″ reissue

Breathing new life into a classic knockout combo, the ZEROS' excellent second single gets a sharp pink reissue from Munster Records. Originally released in '78, it helped set the standards, perfectly encapsulating the '60s garage-inspired teen punk energy. Both tracks are fire really, but "Wild Weekend" especially never gets old.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Munster

TIGER 54 – Tiger 54 CD

Meh. The industrial elements come off soft and the girl's voice is honestly just annoying, and not in a cool Kathleen Hanna kind of way. I just can't get into it. It sounds like some music that would be played in a late-night commercial. The drums are tinny, the production is bland, and there's nothing here that's really punchy enough to keep my attention. Not awful, but not really something I can find myself getting into, either.

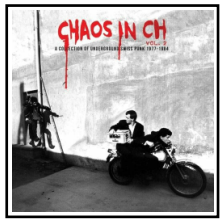
Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Distordia

URBAN MISERY – Demo 2024 cassette

URBAN MISERY kicks off their demo with a slower and distinct bass line that quickly morphs into a super fast-paced classic punk song. It's hard to choose what stood out to me the most: the wailing screams that seem to hover around you, egging you on, the high energy bass that seems to jump out of the shadows and attack you, or the guitar which seems to act as third vocalist in adding high-pitched tones in an almost call-and-response way in "WTF." Overall, great fast-tempo punk.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: self-released

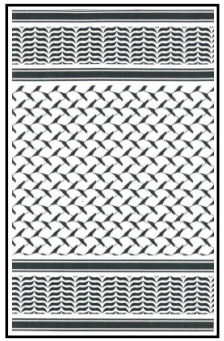
V/A – Chaos in CH, Vol. 2: A Collection of Underground Swiss Punk 1977—1984 LP



This album is an excellent collection of punk and early hardcore from Switzerland from 1977–1984, featuring seven bands. My favorite is the SQUIRT with their brand of hardcore punk influenced by DEAD KENNEDYS, D.O.A., and BLACK FLAG according to the booklet in the record, but sounding like they owe just as much of their sound to BGK or the NITWITZ. Every band on this record is good. The BASTARDS start off Side B with the instantly recognizable "Impossibilities." What a great compilation!

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Beat Generation

V/A – Liberation for All: A Palestine Benefit Comp cassette



Punk, in theory, should always stand against oppression. Period! It is really sad to see that some "punk" communities, especially in Germany, are making excuses and covering their eyes in support of the tyrannical ethno-supremacist "state" of Israel. We have been warned throughout the years, through punk lyrics, about the horrors of war and genocide. And now, it is happening right before our eyes. It is impossible to take the side of the oppressor and be "punk." Are you the solution or the problem? With this said, there is also a lot of love and empathy being put forth by the worldwide punk community with all the tributes, benefits, compilations, and donation drives. This compilation began as a fantastic way to raise funds for the very first Open Palm Fest, but due to unforeseen circumstances, it turned into a benefit for Palestine. All proceeds from this comp will be donated to the Red Crescent Society in Palestine. Much love to all the awesome bands and the label for putting this together. *Free Palestine!*

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Open Palm

3 THE HARDWAY – Cost of Living / Newspaper 7″

3 THE HARD WAY is a unique, kind of experimental riot grrrl band. With the first side of "Cost of Living," you're thrown into a very rhythmic setting with lots of female grunting and singing. It very much reminded me of "Pacific Coast Highway" by SONIC YOUTH, I loved it. On the other side, "Newspaper" felt more artsy and melodic. It made me feel like I was in a washing machine being tumbled around and hearing the singing from inside a soapy space. Overall, I really enjoyed how these two tracks played with each other and created a really unique experience.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: self-released

ABERRANT KINGDOM – AK LP

Sixteen years in the making, Pittsburgh's ABERRANT KINGDOM debuts with this ten-track LP. Comprised of James May on guitar and vocals, Ian Tepper on drums, and Pat Herron on bass, *AK* is a garagey with blown-out amp/tape saturation guitar (sounds fucking awesome) and strained, mid-to-higher-register vocals that almost remind me BAD BRAINS (albeit, not at a breakneck tempo). Rhythms shuffle, chug, and sludge along over big, splashy drums, creating a looseness that is contrasted by sections of really tight riffing that keep everyone in lockstep; a well-achieved contrast. At times a doom metal band (opener "Fiscal Clit"), at some a prog riff-machine ("Aberrant Kingdom"), at others a good-time garage rock outfit ("Brag and Boast")—whatever's happening, it works for me. You can hear the love and work that they've put into these songs over the last sixteen years, honing every bar from drum fill to errant howl. This truly rips.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released

ABUSEMENTS – Grievance Beerwater Reprisal LP

There's a surprising amount of depth to this record. *Grievance Beerwater Reprisal* kicks off with a string of songs that can be best described as bar punk. You know what I'm talking about—the kind of band you'd love to come across while hopping between your favorite watering holes. But halfway through, things shift gears as they launch into their single "Mind," which sounds much more like the KINKS than anything else on the slab. There's a Brit-pop/Southern rock tinge that makes an appearance throughout, but the majority of the record has a sinister RAMONES vibe more akin to ANTISEEN, but less gritty. This is a very polished and produced punk album and is essentially a love/hate letter to ABUSEMENTS' home state of Alabama. Or maybe it's a cautionary tale. Regardless, fun stuff here.

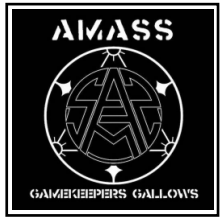
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: American Leather

ADRESTIA – Requiem LP

This is one for the more metal-oriented punks—those who like people who can actually play their instruments or, to put it objectively, musicians who are actual musicians. ADRESTIA is, or rather was, from Sweden, since *Requiem*, the band's seventh LP (including two splits) is their farewell record. I had never paid too much attention to ADRESTIA, and while I do think they are very good at what they do, what they do is not really my cup of tea. The music oscillates between heavy and dark metallic Swedish hardcore like MARTYRDOD or MISANTROPIC and old school death metal, and it all gets a little too technical and not wild enough for me at the end of the day, although it certainly sounds angry and the lyrics are clearly political. The very polished production highlights the band's qualities and what they want to achieve, and I found myself quite liking the epic sludgy metal number "Where Gods Die" a lot, with very melodic guest vocals from one Linda Johansson. Interesting.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Anomie / Global Help / Insane Society / Loner Cult / Phobia / Terror State / Thrash Out

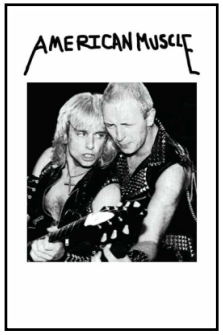
AMASS – Gatekeepers Gallows 12″



Seven tracks of throwback to classic-era anarcho-punk. I understand that members of AMASS lend their skills to the current incarnation of ALTERNATIVE, which is a useful reference point for their sound. Pissed-off, spitfire vocals are delivered in a dueling style that alternates between tuneful shouts and spoken diatribes. AMASS hits all of the notes that one would expect—bouncing bass lines, sharp, biting guitar, blatantly political lyrics—yet they aren't entirely paint-by-numbers peace punk. There is more melody present than I was expecting, which, coupled with the clean production, tempers the aggression a bit. Setting that aside, it's exciting to hear a band with a strong anarchist message playing in a style that isn't so common in 2024. With echoes of CONFLICT, D.I.R.T., and the SYSTEM, how can you go wrong?

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Grow Your Own

AMERICAN MUSCLE – American Muscle demo cassette



Debut release from this trio of Detroit steakheads. These dudes mix BUCK BILOXI-styled dum-dum braggadocio, GOLDEN PELICANS-esque hard-headed hard rock, and PENETRATORS-esque tuneful budget punk to cook up four cheap, greasy tracks perfect to kill brain cells by. The cassette's highlight is "Best Band in Detroit," where the only lyric—delivered as much as a threat as it is a boast—is "I'm the best band in Detroit." Maybe the best conflation of band and frontman since "Tighten Up"! Turn your brain off and the stereo up!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Girlsville

ANGEL FACE – Angel Face LP

New raw garage in supergroup packaging, all by way of Tokyo. Boasting members from FADEAWAYS, FIRESTARTER, and most notably Fink from the almighty TEENGENERATE, the band has more aptitude than most. This LP burns in the red, and is the perfect amount of slightly deranged and perfectly out-of-sync. There is a pubescent joy that gets raked into the songwriting in a way that moves bodies to a beat, with the band's backing harmonies being the sell. "That's Enough," "Bring Me Back," and "Take It Or Leave It;" the record is teenage joy spun on a platter.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Slovenly

ANTI–SYSTEM – No Laughing Matter LP reissue

Somewhere back near the dawning of mass home internet access, I came across ANTI-SYSTEM. Upon hearing their blistering anarcho hardcore, I immediately emblazoned ANTI-SYSTEM on the back of my jacket. Fastfoward several blinks of an eye later, and I couldn't be more stoked to see a reissue of *No Laughing Matter*, an absolute stellar full-length. First released in 1985, *No Laughing Matter* contains hardline lyrics about peace, animal liberation, and nuclear war which remain poignant to this very moment. ANTI-SYSTEM strikes that perfect balance of anarcho punk's chaotic playfulness and the surging rage of hardcore, and inadvertently created the bastard child known as crust punk. In reality, *No Laughing Matter* is a shifting album—an album that shifts from UK82 hardcore, to sound clips, to harmonic instrumentals and back. This LP is packed with thirteen songs and is an absolute monolith worth listening to in its entirety.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Vile

AUTOBAHNS – First LP! LP

Good shit. I've been pretty critical of this so-called "egg-punk" movement since the CONEHEADS pretty much set the quality standard for that sound with their first LP. However, I think this band has something very interesting going for them. Lean, mean punk with enough spacy synths to keep it unique and refreshing. Very catchy riffs, with this nice kind of watery yet fuzzed-out production that keeps me captivated the whole way through. I also really enjoy the vocalist's pissed-off sounding yelp—it complements songs like "Prick" and "Off Your Mask" very well. Clocking in at just 26 minutes, this is the kind of egg-punk that bum-rushes you with two 40s plus a bag of pills in its hands, and I'm lovin' it.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Feral Kid / Legless / Magüt / Phantom

BAD YEAR – Bad Year LP

This band advertises themselves as a '90s throwback, and wouldn't you know it, they're certainly not fooling! Melodic, harmonious punk that brings to mind LAGWAGON, SAMIAM, and a hornless LESS THAN JAKE. BAD YEAR sounds like they'd be right at home on one of those early Fat Wreck comps that everyone still gushes over. Really catchy stuff, though. Tight, and produced extremely well. I need to specifically give props to the drummer here, as their dynamics really bring the energy of this record to a whole other level. I won't lie, I'm usually not a fan of these modern bands who do the retro pop punk sound, but BAD YEAR really pulls it off. This is well worth a couple spins if you're into this type of thing.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Motorcycle Potluck / Snappy Little Numbers

new worlds. This new reissue comes with a much-needed remixing and remastering job, giving even more force to the knotted, intricately structured art-sprawl of these nine tracks compared to the thin and murky initial pressing; despite already being deeply familiar with the record, there's so many nuances here that are only now revealing themselves to me twenty years on. The EX and DOG FACED HERMANS were two frequent compass points used to orient the band's approach (and not without reason), but it's impossible to disentangle the INTIMA's stormy, grey-skied intensity from being the product of anyplace but the Pacific Northwest—think *Scrabbling at the Lock*, if it had been left in a damp forest of evergreens to be slowly consumed by moss. Desperate shouts deliver pointed lyrics that are more poetic than didactic, focused largely on intertwined threads of ecological collapse and the accelerating wreckage of capitalism and imperialism, squalls of mournful violin collide with angular, alternately tuned guitar jabs, the drumming clanks and rattles with the kinetic rhythms of industrial machinery, and the result is music intended for dancing amongst the broken glass of shattered empire (more now than ever).

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Post Present Medium

THE OKMONIKS – Afterparty Fever!!! LP

The OKMONIKS give us another LP of punk-infused garage rock. What else would they call their second album, if their first is called *Party Fever!!!*? This band usually has a really driving beat with some great-sounding vocals, and often there is some really rocking guitar/organ interplay. My favorite on this is a song called "Next Worse Thing." This is a great LP for fans of garage rock/punk or just having a good time.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Slovenly

THE PROLES – Kings Road Tapes 1979 12″

A deluxe treatment for the *Kings Road Punks* EP that unearthed the PROLES' 1979 demos when it came out in 1990, this comprehensive release documents the band's brief tenure, collecting those four songs along with some extra live and rehearsal material. It really doesn't get more classic than this. While the additional tracks don't add much to these South London punks' legacy, it does service fiends like me who have always wanted to hear a little more PROLES. The original 7" is one of my favorite first wave artifacts, and it's the epitome of O.G. snotty Brit-punk, teetering at times on the verge of sounding like a Fred Armisen parody. On the final brief live snippet here, the singer is right on character, spewing further shit talk on the PISTOLS and the CLASH. Cool-ass record.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Nausea

THE STEMS – Mushroom Soup: The Citadel Years LP

While these guys delivered a deliberately '60s-sounding psychedelic/garage experience, they were actually an Australian band from the '80s. They were a big deal back then. If you're a fan of fuzz and organ and your sensibilities are firmly rooted in the garage, you'll latch onto this one. That's a sound that can be sort of hit or miss with me, mostly because I find it's easy to do a poor job of it. Not so here. This is good shit. Eighteen cuts is definitely pushing my attention span, but it doesn't come at the expense of quality. Excellent record.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Cheersquad

THE STIFFS – Demos and Rarities 1978–81 LP

The STIFFS were a punky power pop band out of Lancashire, England who put out a handful of damn-near-perfect singles in the late '70s to early '80s. As is often the case, there were a bunch of other songs from that early era that were previously unreleased, but luckily Projectile Platters have compiled those demos and rarities together and released them here on this LP. We only get a couple demos (the brilliant "Inside Out" and the lesser "Over the Balcony"), and they are pretty fleshed-out versions of the songs they would ultimately become. The big draw of this compilation, for me at least, is the 1979 radio session; in this stretch we get tight, loud, and energetic versions of "Brookside Riot Squad" and "Kids on the Street," plus a couple others. These types of collections can often be curiosities at best, but this offering is for more than just the completists or those that are still on the hunt for an original copy of the "Standard English" single. This is an awesome snapshot in time of an early punk band in their prime, doing it better than most did or ever will.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Projectile Platters

SQUID PISSER – Dreams of Puke CD

At first listen, I thought I wasn't the audience for this at all. Three One G-style glitchy emoviolence with goregrind-worthy song titles and the album art just had me thinking, "are we still doing this?" But I'm quick to admit when I'm wrong, and I was majorly wrong here. This does, to a degree, harken back to noisy, mathy hardcore that was omnipresent in the late '90s and early '00s, but it's presented in such an unfussy and dialed-in way that it just hits right through your sternum. The effects-heavy vocals, the laser gun guitars, the never-dampening rush of drum beats, all of these elements connect. There isn't really a gimmick here despite first appearances, and the songs are really brilliantly written. A burner like "Vaporize a Neighbor" dips its wings in industrial metal and noise rock as it flies by at a thrashing pace that never lets up. Then the following title track goes full theatrical synth doom, a sub-sub-genre I'm not even sure existed before. Hyperactivity is the name of the game here, but it never feels unfocused. It's the opposite, in fact, leading to a singular listening experience that hits hard. Genre signifiers be damned (even though I've dropped about a hundred in this review alone).

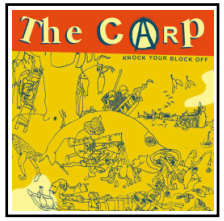
Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Skin Graft / Sweatband

STILL ANIMALS – Still Animals LP

STILL ANIMALS' self-titled album offers ten tracks of mid-tempo garage rock over twenty-six minutes, delivering an inoffensive, straightforward sound that might be more engaging in a live setting. Hailing from St. Louis, Missouri, the four-piece plays with energy, but I kept hoping they would eventually turn it up to eleven and they never even got close. By the fourth track, the lack of variation makes the LP feel a bit monotonous. It's fine, there just aren't any memorable moments to be found here other than the song title "Here's a Song," which I thought was hilarious.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Slovenly

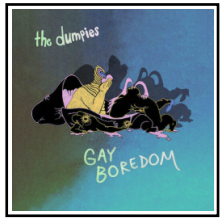
THE CARP – Knock Your Block Off LP



The CARP is from Cleveland, and I think I can hear some of the historic Cleveland bands embedded in their sound. At first quick listen, I wasn't paying much attention until I started noticing that the bass sounded a bit like FLIPPER. After that, I started noticing song structures not unlike DEVO. I heard someone describe this as '77 punk, but that's not how I would describe it. This is bass-driven punk that can evoke memories of my first time listening to FLIPPER and the FEEDERZ, along with DEVO. The sound is nice and thick, and I imagine that it would work extremely well live. I don't want to force this band into any one subgenre of punk because they are coming at us from all directions, doing whatever they want to do. It sounds great, I was playing air drums the whole time through several listens. Total Punk gives us another great record. This did indeed knock my block off.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Total Punk

THE DUMPIES – Gay Boredom LP



The DUMPIES' *Gay Boredom* is a raw, energetic garage punk album that moves back and forth between mid-tempo melodic pop and fast, chaotic bursts of sound. Formed in Austin, Texas in 2017 and now based in Astoria, Oregon, this five-piece blasts out nineteen tracks in just over nineteen minutes, keeping things short and punchy. Produced by music legend Tim Kerr, the album sounds cohesive while covering a range of styles, with the title track's vocals serving a Richard Butler (the PSYCHEDELIC FURS) vibe while "Ol' Pal" has a chaotic, FAT DAY-like energy. The double-time cover of YOUNGER LOVERS' "Ballad of Two Stubborn Men" is a tasty standout. I enjoyed the shit out of this album.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Dirt Cult

THE INTIMA – Peril & Panic LP reissue

Originally released in 2003, *Peril & Panic* was the first (and last) full-length recording from early '00s Portland/Olympia anarcho avant-punks the INTIMA, and as a teenager who was confined to a largely regressive and apolitical scene 2,000 miles away at the time, it's hard to articulate the ways in which this band and record helped to unfold maps in my mind that ultimately led me to all sorts of

BAND OF BASTARDS / BLACK MERCY – American Carnage / The Curse split LP

BLACK MERCY and BAND OF BASTARDS are both punk/hardcore bands from Austin, Texas. This split LP offers '80s-style blasts of hardcore on both sides. BLACK MERCY has a bouncy, lurchy feel on tracks like "The Curse." They call to mind the frenetic urgency of SOUL GLO and classics like MINOR THREAT's self-titled release. I particularly enjoyed "Salvo," with its guitar soloing and danceable breakdowns, and imagine this would be a ton of fun to see live. BAND OF BASTARDS features former members of SPARTA and …AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD. Interestingly though, the band sounds like neither of those, and once again conjures not only '80s hardcore but also DC hardcore (my favorite kind!) in particular. "FYP" is a powerful anthem, with driving drums and a switch to an upbeat rhythm midway through. I loved the lyrics of "Lack of Love," a snarling treatise on "shitheads with no remorse," exploring empty words and the disconnect of those who make policies and those who have to live with them. Overall, I am excited by what these bands are doing, their take on the world, and the politics/values they are covering. What this split did, which is what all good splits should do, is make me wish I was at a show they were both playing—ideally in front of a building we were all protesting. Coke bottle clear with blue swirl vinyl frankly also sounds delightful, and this release can provide you that!

Reviewer: Katy Otto
Label: (iN)Sect Records

BEIGE BANQUET – Ornamental Hermit LP

BEIGE BANQUET is anything but beige when it comes to their musical style. They bring an almost artsy and darker vibe to punk, utilizing both distorted bass lines and heavy percussion at times. What gripped me most was the haunting repetition of vocal lines that were layered over noisy and gloomy instruments. They're able to smoothly transition from a slightly heavier and noisier energy in "Parasitic Energy" to a quieter percussion solo in the intro of "Mind Lapse", which I find just really well done. The use of spoken words was really interesting too, and kept me on my toes. Overall, BEIGE BANQUET brings a unique twist and energy to punk.

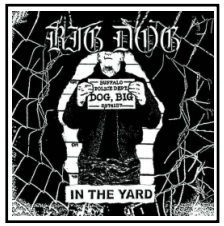
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Future Shock / Swish Swash

BEROSSZULÁS – Az Ölésröl EP

Budapesti noise punkers BEROSSZULÁS create the swirling basement hardcore that I am such a sucker for. With all six tracks coming in under eight minutes, *Az Ölésröl* was definitely recorded in one long take, with what could also be instruments plugged straight into the board. It's all brutal and slightly unleashed into the void of experimental—echoes of an Eastern European take on MUTATED VOID, perhaps.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Stoned to Death

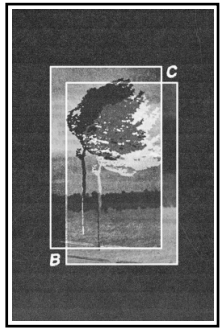
BIG DOG – In the Yard EP



A healthy serving of meat-and-potatoes skinhead rock'n'roll from VIOLENT WAY alums, and boy, I hope you are hungry. Bully XL vocals barking against the usual *bêtes noires* of the modern skin, namely scruffy bastards, fighting, and middle class frauds. Lyrics are, much like this record, both short and to-the-point, and delivered with aplomb over some extremely rockin' stompers. If you can't run with the BIG DOG, stay on the porch.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Mendeku Diskak

BINGO CRÉPUSUCULE – Demo 2023 cassette



The great nation of France has a fine pedigree in the art of Oi!, and in particular, the type of cold, skeletal Oi! that only a country that has birthed both existentialism and Gauloises can. Bands like SYNDROME 81 and LITOVSK have managed to sever boot boy rockin' from its backslapping *bonhomie*, and BINGO CRÉPUSUCULE is a fine addition to this pantheon. Intricate guitar lines and atmospheric, driving riffs meet wonderfully despondent vocals in an intoxicating mix. Put this on, have a good old stare out the window, and ponder the nature of being.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Dirty Slap

BLU ANXXIETY – Morbid Now Morbid Later LP

Straight from New York, macabre-obsessed ghouls BLU ANXXIETY return from their slumber to unleash *Morbid Now Morbid Later* upon the world, and just in time for the fall. Embracing a diverse range of goth subgenres while infusing the music with sharp political commentary, BLU ANXXIETY delves deep into the dark sounds of EBM, industrial, and goth rock, while retaining a deathrock backbone. Frontghoul Chi Dracula Orengo describes the band's sound as "dark freestyle," a unique perspective and ability to transform various musical influences into a cohesive goth aesthetic, from hip hop to Latin-type beats. You can hear ALIEN SEX FIEND as well as CHRISTIAN DEATH in their music—you might get the sense that if it's dark, and you can dance to it, it's in there somewhere. An eerily fun and complete album that pushes the boundaries of a genre that encompasses so much, yet no one dares to do it all at once.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Toxic State

BOTTLED VIOLENT – No Rules EP

Indonesia's BOTTLED VIOLENT has a name that pretty much tells you all you need to know about their style. With a heavy '80s USHC influence (namely MINOR THREAT), BOTTLED VIOLENT rips through six tracks on their *No Rules* EP. Each song is short and sweet with plenty of aggro vocals and clean but frantic guitarwork to go around. Check out "Watch Yourself From the Cops" and "No More."

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Bollocks / No Norms

BOUNCE HOUSE – Pop Rox cassette

More so than anything, what causes my ears to prick up at the end of the day is songcraft. You can build up almost anything on good bones, and that's something Santa Ana's BOUNCE HOUSE gets from the jump. From the opening notes of "Sweetness," which echoes the heartaching best of the jangly Dunedin sound, I'm hooked. What follows is a peppier affair, though the duo never strays far from their melancholic center. Even the zig-zagging rock'n'roll of "Cannonball," while a certified earworm, has a sort of moroseness that I find deeply appealing. Add to that a nimble bass line and snotty hook, and I'm fully sold. There's really not a snoozer in the handful of tunes—even the plaintive closer "Yesterday's Bus Pass" is compelling with its shimmering guitar and wistful harmonies. All in all, these are five well-penned tracks of guitar pop that I'll keep coming back to until the next EP (or, fingers crossed, a full-length).

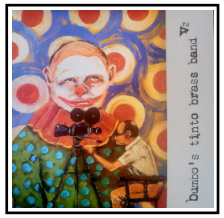
Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Popular Affliction

BRASS LIP – Vol. II cassette

Two-piece punk band with lots of shouting and feminist lyrics. I never would have guessed that this was recorded on GarageBand with only two people—the sound is so full that you can't tell. The talking style of singing in the verses, with a quick tempo change for the chorus, made "Gentleman of Leisure" my favorite song. I enjoyed the more exploratory guitar in the intro and solo, and kind of wished there was more like that in some of the other tracks. The variation of more droning guitar in "Criminal Conversation" helped to build out their sound as well. Overall, I would say this is a solid couple of tracks.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: self-released

BUMBO'S TINTO BRASS BAND – Maybe Later EP



Interesting mix of modern post-punk and artful post-rock—think URANIUM CLUB meets '90s-era Thrill Jockey bands like TORTOISE and the SEA AND CAKE. Most of the tracks follow a low-key approach that blends lightly distorted bass grooves with shuffling drums, clean and jazzy guitar lines, and spoken vocals. There are no major hooks or big moments, but the record flows well, highlighting the restrained performances that are occasionally punctuated by a warbling theremin. This is an evening jam, cool and mellow without being weak or relegated to the background.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Bumbo

board tape of the trio's final live performance later that year (which was apparently on top of a trailer outside of a pub beer garden?!), with the sharp, pitch-perfect quality of the latter almost indistinguishable from the former. YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS would be an easy and not inaccurate comparison, from the steady pulse of the Roland CR-8000 serving as SKEET's mechanical drummer to Kay Booth's fragile vocals and introspective lyrics, and while the yearning minimalism of "Brief Call" and "Alone Tonight" is colossally *Colossal Youth*, "Young Girls" and "Avril in the Alps" ramp up the digital tempo ever so slightly and dig into a scratchy, bass-forward danceability somewhere between ORANGE JUICE and JOSEF K on the Postcard Records wavelength, and the paper-thin bedroom pop strum of "I Was Never Told" bridges the very narrow gap between the MARINE GIRLS and SOLID SPACE, juxtaposing Kay's sweet and airy delivery with the song's blunt, direct subject matter ("Did you want just for sex / Or simply someone to hold"). Beguiling and beautiful.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Efficient Space

SLAN – Ägd LP

Sweden, the country where playing ANTI-CIMEX lulls children to sleep. There is certainly no shortage of hardcore bands up there, and here comes a new contender in the notorious and much contested "fast and furious käng" category. SLAN is from Gothenburg and includes members of the rather good STRUL (in a SKITKIDS way), among other bands that I am not going to pretend I actually know. Their first EP *Skiter I Allt* released last year was a definite scorcher if you like your Scandicore on the mangel side of things (by which I mean more on the faster, MOB 47 side) if you want to be anal about it, and the boys are back in business with a full-length entitled *Ägd*. The recipe hasn't changed much, but the production is a tad rawer and the vocals more upfront. While the EP had a definite '80s Stockholm feel to my impeccable ears, the LP makes me think of a dirtier version of KRIGSHOT as well because SLAN manages to play that fast, and of Uppsala bands like CUMBRAGE or even of early VICTIMS in the singing style. It is a seriously raging, direct high-energy effort with some class riffing, but I can't help but find the LP a little long for this style of punk with a playtime of almost twenty-four minutes (and everyone knows we have a twenty-minute attention span these days, if that). At the end of the day, yet another hard-hitting win from Sweden.

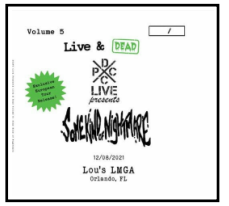
Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Autoreverse / Flyktsoda / Not Enough / Rawmantic Disasters

SOFT KILL – Roseland 12″

SOFT KILL from Chicago, Illinois recently released the three-song *Roseland* 12″. The opening "Blood On My Shoes" is a shoegazing, synth-heavy opus that reminds me heavily of Y2K-era college radio. "Roseland," the following track, is a bit more upbeat with a lilting dance beat and a very new wave feel. The closing song "Circles" is a cover of DAG NASTY, and is a pretty rocking take on the song. In all, the *Roseland* release represents the multi-faceted approach to music SOFT KILL has become known for.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Born Losers

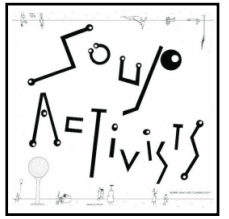
SOME KIND OF NIGHTMARE – DCxPC Live & Dead, Vol. 5 LP



Here's a live and energetic offering from SOME KIND OF NIGHTMARE, who have been a band since the mid-'00s. Very tight and adept at their craft, the power trio graces the crowd with a throwback to the '90s style of punk rock, like what you would find on one of those *East Coast Pogo Attack* videos. Socially-conscious lyrics channeled through polished, melodic street punk. As far as live recordings go, the quality here is top-notch. Fans of the band will want to track this down.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: DCxPC

SOUP ACTIVISTS – Mummy What Are Flowers For? LP



This is some amazing weirdo-punk post-pop out of St. Louis—think '60s-inspired TELEVISION PERSONALITIES-adjacent stuff if they let Gordon Gano write lyrics and play xylophone for them. The band is helmed by Martin Meyer of LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS notoriety, and takes the energy and angsty shock of that project and gives it the JONATHAN RICHMAN treatment with sinisterly sweet storytelling lyrics and simple melodies that get stuck in your head like a food stain you can't get out. Slightly reminiscent of Devon Williams leaving OSKER after their antithetic punk scene opus "Idle Will Kill" to form FINGERS CUT MEGAMACHINE and whatever else he's doing these days.

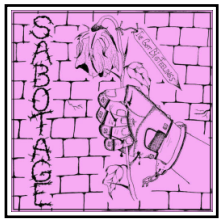
Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Inscrutable

RÉSILIENCE – Grise Époque LP

Tasteful and melodic Oi! with classically French deathrock undertones. This is a perfect listen for the transition of summer to autumn, right down to the sound of rainfall on the opening instrumental. RÉSILIENCE has a full and muscular sound, including great crunchy riffs, some sinewy guitar leads, and gruff vocals that lead catchy sing-alongs throughout. There are no surprises to be found here, only a reliably sturdy listen for fans of CAMERA SILENS and RIXE.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Mendeku Diskak

SABOTAGE – I've Got Big Feelings EP



Need some good screaming? Look no further. The duality of screams from both a female and male vocalist throughout this EP really blew me away, especially the call-and-response in "I've Got Big Feelings." Somewhat screamo at times, but otherwise HC/punk, SABOTAGE is not messing around. With a sprinkle of tempo changes while still keeping their fast energy, these guys sure are hardcore.

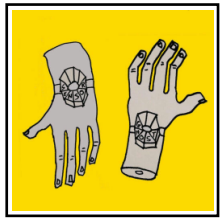
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Notonlabel

SATANIC TOGAS – Illusions / 1998 7″

This is the latest and greatest from song factory Ishka Edmeades, also of GEE TEE and TEE VEE REPAIRMANN fame. Edmeades doesn't break the mold here, but comes packing with two tracks of snappy, hook-laden punk that satisfies your sweet tooth. The tape-saturated sound bolsters these two bangers and makes them sizzle and pop. The riffs are there, hyperactive but dialed-in, with great licks laid on top to seal the deal. If you know what you're in for, you're still in for a treat. And if you're not hip to this sound yet—dive in.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Goodbye Boozy

SENSOR GHOST – 3 Songs EP



Oddball DC trio offering some sparse and angular art punk. *3 Songs* showcases farty bass, simple drums, guitar riffs that go between flowing, lightly distorted leads and staccato jabs—the base ingredients for this type of arty sound, right? The thing setting SENSOR GHOST apart, for me, is the vocals. While playing bass, Mike Andre performs an almost spoken word performance, sneaking in a range of notes from syllable to syllable, creating a textured, spiky landscape that's going to have the lights on your decibel sensor really dancing. Instruments and vocals pulse throughout the verses, very steadily landing on beat, while choruses get into a syncopated groove with a unique propulsion that I wasn't expecting, especially apparent on "Crystal Spa." After some listens, this really grew on me—I get shades of the most experimental DEVO tracks, with a folksy lyrical approach. Mike Andre and Amanda Huron (guitar) are also in PUFF PIECES, and Sam Lavine (drums) plays in LIGHT BEAMS.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Dischord / Lovitt

SILICON HEARTBEAT – 2889 EP

SILICON HEARTBEAT is a perfect horror rock/punk band for spooky season, but also year-round. These guys are so strange in the best way. I really enjoyed the variety of more punk songs to the weirder, more synth-heavy ones. With clear distorted bass lines sprinkled throughout ghost-like synths, they create an eerie vibe that seems to linger. They end their EP with a fantastic cover of KRAFTWERK's "The Model;" a bit more reminiscent of BIG BLACK's cover, but more otherworldly. Just by checking out their album cover, you know you're in for an unearthly good time.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Feral Kid

SKEET – Simple Reality LP

SKEET's backstory is a familiar one in narratives of early '80s UK DIY—band forms in a mid-sized industrial city, plays a handful of shows, records some songs at home with the aid of very modest technology, then dissolves before actually releasing anything—but their stark, bewitching post-punk isn't so typical. *Simple Reality* rounds up eight once-lost tracks, half from a 1981 demo and half from a sound-

BZDET – Maybe It Is Enough? cassette

A solo synth punk project out of Poland with a handful of releases already put out, BZDET offers up its first US release through the Buffalo tape label, Tetryon—this compilation includes tracks the artist has found to be the most important work of the project so far, as well as three previously unreleased tracks. The album comes out of the gate sounding like NEW ORDER meets MOLCHAT DOMA, but with twenty songs here, the sound expands and explores plenty within that synth punk umbrella. What sets this apart from other synth punk stuff is that, even if you don't speak Polish, you can tell there is a humor and playfulness that stays bubbling just below the surface (exemplified by the closing track "I Don't Need Viagra Boyzz," one of two titled in English). That's not to say these are typical egg-punk offerings, but rather that the music doesn't come across as too polished for its own good, just Polish and good.

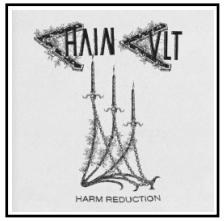
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Tetryon Tapes

CARNAGE ASADA – Head on a Platter CD

First album since 1999 from this Los Angeles band, which has included L.A. punk luminaries like Joe Baiza, filmmaker Dave Markey, and Dez Cadena. The current lineup mixes wah-heavy psych rock, heavy blues jams, and the mostly-spoken observational storytelling of vocalist George Murillo. Songs like "Germs Reborn" have an early L.A. hardcore speed and approach, but most of these tracks are jammy affairs with occasional trumpet backup and even Norteño rhythms. Despite the hardcore pedigree and my unwavering love of most eras of the SST catalog that seems to most influence CARNAGE ASADA, this was a miss for me. "Chinese Lady Aluminum Foil" tells a story about a woman wearing an aluminum foil hat to prevent Martian mind control. And while the song is somewhat sympathetic to her ("Never hurt nobody / Always looks so lonely"), I assume this is about a real person who may have mental health issues. At best, it seems callous. Then we get "Little Fat Princess," another observational tale of a child throwing a tantrum, with the lines, "Little fat princess / Stomping your feet / Little fat princess / Give me something to eat." I mean, it's a kid, and the chorus repeats the title quite a few times. It just sounds out of touch, and both mentioned songs ride a very fine line between describing daily life occurrences and punching down. The musicianship is top-notch and the stylistic diversity is interesting, but it's not a repeat listen for me.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Historical

CHAIN CULT – Harm Reduction LP



Being from Athens, Greece, I like to imagine CHAIN CULT climbed Mount Olympus, battled the gods, and returned victorious with the gods' instruments in tow. Upon returning, they began playing darkened post-punk (with an emphasis on the punk) and releasing epic output regularly. *Harm Reduction*, the band's latest recording, is a start-to-finish perfect album. Eight songs in which each member of the band expertly wields their instrument while melodic, gritty vocals bring the sneer and energy. Lyrically, *Harm Reduction* explores deep territory with lessons in life and death, our rapidly failing planet, and the growing political consequences. The title track "Harm Reduction" opens with some great bass, seering guitars, and contains a catchy hook that loops in your mind for days. Personally, I dig "Harrowing Times," which is a driving, nearly anthemic, call to attention. Needless to say, if you haven't listened to CHAIN CULT, well, now is the time.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

CLOSETALKERS – Path to Peace EP

CLOSETALKERS are from Calgary and play a blistering, raw, and very particular mutation of D-beat hardcore. A heavy dose of Scandi-crust blends with noisy Kawakami-inspired riffs to form an abrasive fury that is difficult to match. The opening song "Pestilence" features a fun rhythm breakdown just beyond the midway, and the closer "Narc" opens with a lot of drumwork, which for me is a great kind of bookend to this six-song EP. If you're into PHYSIQUE, YELLOWCAKE, TRENCHRAID, KRASH, or any other type of D-beat punk, you'll want to hear this.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Neon Taste

COMPLETED EXPOSITION / MAXXPOWER – split LP

Osaka's COMPLETED EXPOSITION teams up with Montreal's MAXXPOWER to deliver a blistering platter of fastcore that hits like a series of rabbit punches to the face. COMPLETED EXPOSITION's side showcases dual vocals and includes a few longer tracks with mosh parts to drive your circle pits. MAXXPOWER lives up to their name, blasting through fourteen tracks, half of which clock in at thirty seconds or less, clearly drawing inspiration from the Slap-a-Ham roster. Their songs feature plenty of starts and stops with the occasional mosh part, all powered by drumming that seems almost impossibly fast. This split is highly recommended for fans of classic powerviolence played at utterly insane speeds. Check out the whole split. It'll only take you a few minutes.

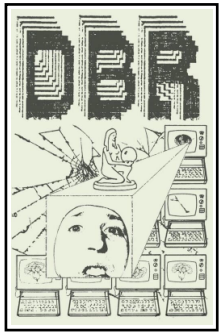
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Rotten to the Core

CROSSED WIRES – Ellipsis LP

Mid-tempo and super catchy as it prods along, there is a lot to like about this, including that it kind of reminds me of SONIC YOUTH with that sort of grinding guitar sound. The female vocals are really nicely delivered. Power pop? Pop punk? Or maybe just pop? Doesn't really matter, this Canadian three-piece has delivered a winner here. This will be a part of my regular rotation for quite some time.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Noyes

D.B.R. – DBR cassette



Berlin synth project on the gloomier side of egg and bedroom punk-related situations. Seems to be a solo project alongside a bunch of friends, which creates different atmospheres on each track and side. Wicked, dubbed "submarine telephone" vocals alongside good synth work. While Side A is a more energetic, power-driven, and interesting blend with tracks like "On You" and "Stick," Side B gets cold and distant (but also interesting), as tracks like "Small Amount" go for warmer, classic sounds in the MINUTEMEN zone.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Turbo

DEAD STREET DREAMERS – Countdown to the Reaper CD

Fun street punk outing here—hard-hitting songs, high-energy vocalist, and a lead guitarist serving up some tasty licks. Nothing groundbreaking, but if you're into stuff like STREET BRATS and early DROPKICK MURPHYS, you'll dig this. Apparently the lead guitarist used to play with RIVER CITY REBELS, and while I can't find which era he belonged to, they're a good comparison point as well.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Screaming Crow

DESORDEN – Afilado Terror LP

Straightedge hardcore punks from Madrid, Spain—not even sure if they're still active, but they have left their imprint on global hardcore for sure, and specifically in the edge scene. Great vocals on behalf of their singer Alenka, phrasing while breaking the voice to achieve long and extensive fighting screams expressing themselves on different issues, such as drug abuse, sexism, and mental health schemes. The band tries to push the ethos "hardcore is our home," and I think they achieved their goal. Blunt-force project, probably one of the most relevant from Europe nowadays regarding straightedge, for sure.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Quality Control HQ

DIE VERLIERER – Notausgang LP

Absolutely stellar post-punk out of Berlin. What struck me the most on the first listen was how varied the songs are, in both style and length, while still maintaining a common overall sound and feel. In that way, this record almost reminds me of being at a label showcase—the bands might not all sound the same, but you get why they are all there. *Noutausgang* opens up sounding like early Finnish new wave, then follows that up with a longer, moodier groove, and then turns again on the third track with an early highlight in the group shout that is "Fickt Diese Stadt." The theme of variety continues throughout with a sub-two-minute hardcore track ("Albtraum") giving way to the near-six-minute smolder of "Stacheldraht." If you dig post-punk,

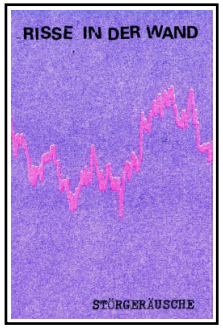
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Island Time

RICHARD HAMILTON – Yellow Datsun Car / I Want U 2 Call Me 7″

The initial reference to "the Mission" and the fact that the car on the cover has California plates made me think that this dude (or this band) is a San Francisco thing., but it looks like it's a Cleveland thing. Maybe. It's all very easy to listen to. Catchy and going along at a very nice tempo, the male/female vocals are almost soothing. It's perfect for the jangly and poppy backdrop. Reminds me of FROM BUBBLEGUM TO SKY. Really great pop music.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Feral Kid / Quality Time

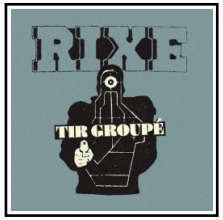
RISSE IN DER WAND – Störgeräusche cassette



Rip-roaring punk demo tape from Nuremberg, Germany. Five songs of high-energy, revved-up, aggressively mid-tempo punk with barked higher-register vocals. A guitar, bass, and drums power trio, with the guitarist also doing vocal duty. At times, the vocalist sounds to me like a German version of Christina from VANILLA POPPERS, which is certainly not a bad thing. RISSE IN DER WAND kinda rips! I would absolutely love to see this band play live, even if it were just through a titular crack in the wall.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Bad Health

RIXE – Tir Groupé EP



I've been a fan of this Parisian outfit since they arrived on the scene in 2015. Nearly a decade on, RIXE is as vital as ever, and *Tir Groupé* finds the group stabbing out into new territory. While the core tenets of their sound are still present, they've filed down the edges by injecting a hint of melody and, notably, have added a drum machine to the mix. This shift salutes French punk forbearers MÉTAL URBAIN without disrupting the underlying foundation of French Oi! á la CAMERA SILENS. Four concise blasts that beg to be played on repeat, this EP is, I'll venture to assert, a harbinger of more brilliance to come. Perhaps it's time for the lads to make a proper full-length album?

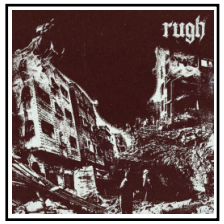
Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

ROUGE SANG – Rouge Sang demo cassette

Depro-punk foursome from Brest, France out with their five-track demo. Fitting nicely in Symphony of Destruction's catalog, ROUGE SANG plays dark, melodic punk, keeping a simple lineup of bass, drums, guitar, and vocals. Bands like T.S.O.L. come to mind, mixed with a bit of whole-gang Oi! backing vocals, creating an interesting mix. Does their name come from the politically-minded French folk-rocker RENAUD's 2006 album *Rouge Sang*? Unclear. Maybe "blood red" or "red blood" (however the translation goes) just makes for a good gothic-tinged band name. As with most Symphony of Destruction releases, I enjoy this; more in a head-nodding-along kind of manner, less in a "I've got to show this to people" kind of way. That said, I'll be interested to see where this group goes and how they lean into their sound, should there be more coming our way.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Symphony of Destruction

RUGH – Quintessence EP



RUGH is the sonic equivalent to a kick to the groin! *Quintessence* is a four-track vicious cacophony of darkened crust in the vein of ALL PIGS MUST DIE and BAPTISTS. RUGH have the ability to pour their anger into every riff and scream, (dark)crafting—TRAP THEM reference, for the ones that are less attentive—an atmosphere that feels both chaotic and cathartic. Their music hits hard and fast, wounding you in an aural punch of ferocity and violence. Crank up the volume, let the bad vibes wash through you.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Bollocks / MLK MVMT

good. Go buy it. Extra points for being a vinyl only release (at least as far as I'm aware).

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: I-94

PERMANENT RESIDUE – Permanent Residue cassette

The second self-titled cassette by Chicago pop punkers PERMANENT RESIDUE, with four poppy, bouncing, mid-tempo numbers with angsty-sounding vocals. It's at least one member from CANADIAN RIFLE going in more of a DISCOUNT/THIS IS MY FIST-type of direction. Songs are very catchy, and if any of the aforementioned comparisons are up your alley, then you're probably going to like this. Personally, I think this style is at its best when the recordings have a bit of grit to them. This tape is too slickly recorded to allow me to relive my youthful pop punk enthusiast years and go gaga over it.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Dead Broke

PET COP – A.S. cassette

Kooky two-piece German egg-punk. The recording is a bit crazy-sounding, even by egg-punk standards, but it works all the same. Seven childhood bedroom-recorded songs of high-energy and even higher treble punk idiocy. Guitar, synth, and a drum machine, but as far as I can tell, just the subtle "thunk" of the kick drum and the wince-inducing snap of the snare. Oh wait, they also use the "clap" sound on one of the songs. This rips, and is thankfully available the world over on three different labels. I know Xtro standardly does runs of only 25 tapes, so US egg-punk enthusiasts should get on it before you have to pay bonkers overseas shipping prices.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: XTRO

POISON IDEA – Blank Blackout Vacant 2xLP reissue

The legendary POISON IDEA from Portland, Oregon sees their fourth studio album, 1992's *Blank Blackout Vacant*, reissued by TKO Records and their own label, American Leather Records (again) in this newly remastered and remixed version of the 2020 deluxe reissue. This double-LP gatefold includes an extra LP's worth of B-sides, rarities, covers, and four songs recorded live on KBOO. The covers include tracks originally by DEAD BOYS, the WHO, and BOOKER T. & THE MG'S. While this doesn't quite pack the same punch as their earlier releases, it stands above most soundalike bands playing this type of punk/hard rock with metal influences. Recommended for fans of the band and collectors who need every damn version. Check out: "Smack Attack."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: American Leather / TKO

RENKORE – La Grieta LP

Bello and Medellin, Colombia collective project defending individual and collective freedom. Noisecore crust punks that mark their sound with glances of hardcore and metal, combining two vocals that are ever-ranting and screaming frantically in the most doomy way possible, fast-paced powerviolence drum cadences, and metallic-driven guitars. Suggested track: "El Pogo de los que Sobran."

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Thrash Out

RHIZOME AND THE FLAVONOIDS – Snifter of Space cassette

After a 2023 debut cassette, RHIZOME returns with another grip of zany new wave absurdity. An Australian solo recording project (unknown if it also is a live band), RHIZOME AND THE FLAVONOIDS have all the ingredients of a kooky, synth heavy, DEVO-esque new wave outfit. The songwriting comes off a bit hard to digest and a little too freeform for the most part, but when there are moments of simplicity within the songs you can get more of a feel for it. I think the best way to make sense of this is that it feels like a new genre of DEVO-jazz, and as someone who doesn't understand jazz, perhaps that's where my confusion comes in.

new wave, Neue Deutsche Welle, or krautrock, you'll easily find something to like here. And if the current song doesn't quite do it for you, the next one might just snap you right back to attention.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Mangel

DIE IN VAIN – Savage New Times EP

It's hard to believe *Savage New Times* from Istanbul's DIE IN VAIN came out just last year; the band clearly did their homework, as this sounds like something Riot City would've put out 40 years ago. Anyway, this is a great record. Five tracks of familiar-sounding, street-punk-infused Oi! that are filled with catchy guitar hooks and gang vocals that punks and skins alike will find agreeable. Odds are you've already rocked this one, but if you haven't yet, check out "War Machine" and "Gösteri Icin."

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

ENDFORM – Menace LP

Neocrust fizzled out in recent years, with only a few of the classic bands being active in the scene. The genre reached a peak around the '00s when bands turned to post-metal or black metal influences, evolving into something new altogether. *Menace*, the newest offering from the Montreal-based ENDFORM, showcases the band's evolution while remaining true to their roots. It opens with the track "Psychic Numbing," a haunting instrumental piece that sets an ominous tone for the album. Some *Word as Law*-era NEUROSIS comes to mind, just before it erupts into an early FALL OF EFRAFA/TRAGEDY combo of modern-meets-classic neocrust, complete with dual vocals. Throughout the album, ENDFORM expands on delivering a blend of melodious aggression, one of the main tropes of the genre. An urgent manifesto of the times we live in, dark music that reflects darker times.

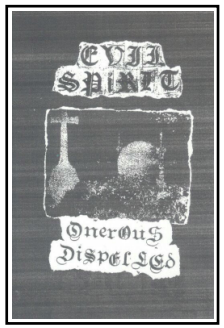
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Abnegat / Counteract / Crustatombe / Deviance / Hecatombe / Insane Society / Loner Cult / Les Nains Aussi / Perce-Oreille / Up the Punx

ERIK NERVOUS – Halfass EP

Pretty decent 7". I enjoyed the speed and the vocals especially. The production hits pretty decently, even though it does get kind of washed out at times, but I can overlook that because the songs on here justify their own existence. Good energy, too. I just wish there were more experimental tracks like "Funky Agoraphobia." "What's In The Box" was the only really underwhelming song.

Reviewer: Neal Ray
Label: Under the Gun

EVIL SPIRIT – Onerous Dispelled cassette



The world of punk music has always been built around a rather tight yet ever-changing circle of what we commonly and admiringly call "cult bands." More often than not, punks are expected to like, acknowledge, or at the very least respect the value of said bands, even though they might not be into them per se. GISM is possibly the cult hardcore band of which I could never really get the appeal. As influential and striking as their music was to many, it never resonated with me, and while I could say this reluctance has to do with their total misunderstanding of the philosophy of CRASS, I think I just find their music cheesy in a bad way. EVIL SPIRIT is from L.A. and intentionally, purposefully sounds a lot like GISM. The vocals sound like a satanic Sakevi, and their metal punk music heavily tends toward old school heavy metal, which leaves me as cold as a Bergman movie. I am sure it is good for what it is, and you can tell EVIL SPIRIT certainly knows what they want to create and succeeds in doing so through a raw and primitive sound production and very well-executed solos. It can get the foot tapping on occasions, but it is just not my cuppa. However, if you love hardcore as much as you do heavy metal and own several sleeveless denim jackets with embroidered patches, *Onerous Dispelled* will delight you.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Roachleg

FAKE LAST NAME – Three Persuasion Domains EP

FAKE LAST NAME is the home-recording alter ego of Ronni What, one half of the Louisiana zolo duo SPLLIT, and while SPLLIT has been increasingly busy and touring relentlessly over the last few years, this new EP marks the first FAKE LAST NAME release since the project debuted with a short-run cassette in 2021. SPLLIT's restless, kitchen-sink noise bursts have positioned them as something like the RESIDENTS for the egg-punk generation, and although FAKE LAST NAME draws from many of the same cracked-up impulses, Ronni ultimately reassembles them into something much more coolly disaffected while working solo. The A-side kicks straight into "Three Persuasion Domains," centering blasé, perfectly over-it vocals (think Su Tissue or Lizzy Mercier Descloux at their most detached) which function as carefully structured lines for strangled no wave guitar and clattering drums to cross in impulsive strokes of color, only for the whole affair to be détourned as "Another Persuasion" on the B-side, with Ana da Silva of the RAINCOATS(!) applying spacious dub echo and glitchy electro accents to smooth out some of the more anxious edges of the original source material. The percussion/electronics-driven warble and deadpan, surrealist spoken word of "Gadfly" is equally great and almost ALGEBRA SUICIDE-like, very deserving of the second life that it's been given here after first appearing on that earlier FAKE LAST NAME tape. Buy the physical record; the visuals and writing included in the packaging/insert are a crucial part of the FAKE LAST NAME experience —keeping the "art" in art-punk.

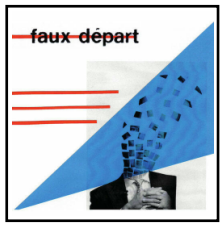
Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Yes We Cannibal

FARSA – Farsa 12″

Right from the introduction to the first song "Futuro Incierto," the listener knows that a relentless, ruthless hardcore tornado with the subtle determination of a charging hippo is coming their way, and you don't have much time to run or grab earplugs to protect what's left of your hearing after years of D-beat abuse. Really, this is for the best. FARSA is a band from Berlin with an international cast and this 12" is their first proper record. They are definitely not reinventing the wheel, which I presume was never their ambition, but they deliver perfectly what they set out to, and I am fine with this humble but crucial achievement. If you like your hardcore music with a hard-hitting käng flavour, FARSA will speak to your heart for fourteen good minutes. I am reminded of SVAVELDIOXID in that they build on the heaviest brand of '90s käng hardcore like SKITSYSTEM, WOLFPACK, or DRILLER KILLER (all without the metal moments), but crank up the distortion and just unleash the fury. The production, the riffs, the gruff angry vocals in Spanish, the pummeling power, everything is done right. A sure win for me.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Aback Distribution / Little Jan's Hammer / Kaos Diystro / Nunchakupunk / Wild Wild East

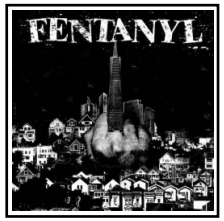
FAUX DÉPART – Si Tu Disparais EP



FAUX DÉPART first hit my radar with their killer 2021 album *Vie Ordinaire*. With this latest EP, their style has evolved in a way that moves their core resonance away from RAMONES-inspired three-chord punk and towards punky power pop like that of the POINTED STICKS. That may be too reductive because FAUX DÉPART is not reliant on formula, and has a distinctive knack for crafting deceptively sophisticated tunes. Artful and catchy, the Lyon trio brings four memorable cuts to the table that just get sweeter with each listen. Rolling back the overdrive gives the guitar a sharper edge that begs for a DOGS comparison. This is a perfect companion piece to the ALVILDA album that came out recently, which is to say that it's a great moment for anyone with a hankering for infectious French power pop.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Andalucia Über Alles / Hidden Bay / Mutant / Rollmops / Tocsin / Tranzophobia

FENTANYL – Fentanyl LP



San Francisco's FENTANYL takes a unique approach to hardcore. Instead of the more commonly heard fuzzy distortion, they opt for a clean, stabbing guitar sound that really does set them apart. On their debut self-titled LP, they pair that DEAD KENNEDYS-inspired treble with rabidly barked, anxiety-riddled lyrics that are direct and to the point. For fans of the members' stacked resumes, which include SPY, SPIRITUAL CRAMP, and WORLD PEACE.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Convulse

if I may say so myself. I think this might only be available in Japan, but it's worth ponying up the cash for the shipping.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Hardcore Kitchen

NASTI – People Problem LP

This is a real bad vibes only record, building on the excellent *Life is Nasti* LP and doubling down on misery. While a lot of hardcore wants to keep jacking up the tempo, I have a soft spot for mid-paced punk like this that invites you to crawl on the floor alongside it. There's something about keeping things at slower BPM that gives you the impression a band doesn't feel the need to impress you with anything other than its reverb-drenched riffs and vocals that snarl through a permanent frown. This is a direct descendent, though more dialed-in and exact, of NO TREND's noisy brand of DGAF hardcore, and that's a lineage always worth paying attention to. With songs like the aptly-named "Snarling," the band pulls you into its muck effectively and doesn't let you go. The stylistic outlier, closer "White Fences II," even goes full industrial for an outro that eventually excises everything but feedback from the band's sound leaving you awash in something formless and nihilistic. A fitting end to a toothsome blast of bent hardcore.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Iron Lung / Static Shock

NERVOUS TICK AND THE ZIPPER LIPS – The Monochromatic Mind of LP

NERVOUS TICK is a mutant and makes music for other mutants. The power of hardcore, the musical melody of power pop, some sounds of synth punk/new wave or egg-punk. I have a hunch that NERVOUS TICK may just be the mutant younger brother of Doc Dart of the CRUCIFUCKS. This was a joy to listen to.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Big Neck / Feral Kid

NO KNOCK – Imagine a World Without Landlord $ EP

Relentless, furious CRAZY SPIRIT-style hardcore from NYC that rips from start to finish. I saw them absolutely decimate a backyard show this summer to the point that I was concerned for the singer's physical condition afterwards —talk about a band leaving everything on the stage (or makeshift patio area). The eight tracks here are mostly straightforward HC shredders, with a sneaky rock'n'roll riff bleeding in occasionally and a well-deserved mid-tempo mini-breakdown every once in a while (probably for safety reasons). The whole band delivers speed and maximum energy to songs like "Can't Afford Suicide," "This is Life, Life is Hell," and "Futureless Cycles." Bleak themes for bleak times. And check out the rad Nick Blinko-style cover art! Go get this now. Fucking intense and fucking awesome.

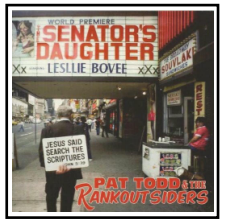
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Peace of Mind

NOX NOVACULA – Feed the Fire LP

I'm not even gonna play, I missed seeing NOX NOVACULA this summer at Skull Fest and I'm pretty sore about it. *Feed the Fire* was released shortly before, and I was hooked on the nine-song album of anthemic deathrock. *Feed the Fire* has its moments of introspection and downtempo gothic rock, but the majority of the songs are demanding change by any means and contain an energy to match, If you like 45 GRAVE or you keep up with CIERN, you'll like this.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Artoffact

PAT TODD & THE RANKOUTSIDERS – Senator's Daughter 7″



The LAZY COWGIRLS remain one of my favorite punk bands of all time. I felt like they always gave 100% effort. There was an energy in their live performances and that carried over into their studio recordings. I found their songs (and still find their songs) infectious. I can't say that I've listened to Pat Todd's latest outfit a ton, but for me this picks up right where the LAZY COWGIRLS left off. It's this awesomeness of gritty rock'n'roll that manages to remain fun and catchy and genuine. Two cuts, both great. One original and one cover. The cover is an obscure one, but one that has a funny tie to the RANKOUTSIDERS. This record is fucking

LUXURY TEETH – DCxPC Live & Dead, Vol. 3 LP

These DCxPC slabs are always a lot of fun. LUXURY TEETH brings us your standard rock'n'roll-flavored hardcore. The first half of the album is a live recording—high-energy and sloppy at times, but the good kind of sloppy. Super raw and minimally produced, if produced at all. Lots of charming banter in between songs, and you can tell the band are among friends in the audience. Just a really pleasant time all around. Warms the cold cockles of my heart. Also there's an OUTFIELD cover slipped in halfway through, and that adds an additional ten points from me. The latter half, the "dead" half, is studio recordings which are a bit more polished and produced, but they do a good job of staying authentic to the band's live charisma. Really enjoyable stuff here, and well worth a spin.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: DCxPC

MALAKILI – Malakili LP

The label describes them as a mix of classic American and Swedish hardcore—that sounds extremely accurate to me. An intense-sounding record, with excellent recording. It starts off with my favorite song on the album, and it is ripping, Swedish-influenced hardcore and a quality album throughout. If you like bands like MOB 47 or DIE KREUZEN, you will probably like this one a lot.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Black Water

MAN–EATERS – Quatro Muchachos LP

I'll be honest, loyal *MRR* readers: *Quatro Muchachos* by MAN-EATERS is one of those albums that doesn't really bring anything new to the table. It's fairly cut-and-dry rock'n'roll, and it'd be a stretch to call it innovative. However, none of that matters, because this is a really kick-ass record and it packs one hell of a punch. High-energy garage rock which brings to mind the RIFFS mashed with the NEW YORK DOLLS and the most psychedelic offerings from KING GIZZARD. The guitars do most of the heavy lifting—wavering between groovy riffs and classic, scorching solos—but the vocalist has the energy of an anthropomorphic lighting bolt. Also, the album title has to be a ZZ TOP reference, right? If so, that's ten extra bonus points. Lovely stuff here.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Feel It

MARIA T–TA Y EL EMPUJÓN BRUTAL – Maria T–Ta y el Empujón Brutal LP

Stripped-down, raw, and primal, MARIA T-TA Y EL EMPUJÓN BRUTAL offered a pointed rebuke to the late '80s male-centric Peruvian punk scene. The songs here were recorded in 1987 and portray a catchy, garage punk act having fun while poking a middle finger into the eye of a repressive system. The recording quality is quite crude and low-fidelity. MARIA T-TA's vocals are prominent in the mix along with the drums, but the guitar and bass recede to a point of obscurity, making the progressions somewhat hard to decipher. The album includes some acoustic versions of a few songs as well. A fascinating document to be sure.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Discos Mugrientos / Sub

MENSTRUAL CYCLES – Retirement Home EP reissue

Like curry sauce and chips, boots and braces, and skateboards and a woodchipper, some things are better together than the sum of their parts. Among this heady mix are punks and skins, and this reissue is a perfect example of the form. A Scottish expat landing in '80s Florida might have struggled (not least because of the weather), but the singer here has managed to weave magic. Easily could have appeared on a Riot City or No Future comp, and a lot of fun to be had. Oi!, and indeed, fucking Oi!

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Queer Pills

MIDDLE / SLAMMING AVOID NUTS – split CD

Okay, so first off—SLAMMING AVOID NUTS is probably my new favorite band name of all time. Secondly, this is a really great split album with a whole ton of musical diversity, and not even just between the bands. MIDDLE flops between sounding like an early '90s dissonant Dischord act and sloppy, power-chord-heavy street punk. The aforementioned SLAMMING AVOID NUTS play Oi!-infused D-beat with throaty, guttural vocals. High-energy all around; a solid disc

GERM BOMB – Monochrome Nightmare LP

Collection of old school, NWOBHM-leaning metal/hard rock from this Swedish duo. Their Bandcamp mentions D-beat, crossover, and black metal influences, but I barely hear any of that other than on "Narcissist," which has a D-beat backbone but is not raw in the least. These are head-bobbing, mid-tempo rockers with doomy leads, heavy flanged riffs, and sung vocals. "Germ Bomb" has a catchy anthemic chorus, and soulful standout "Turn the Cross" sounds like Nick Cave fronting PENTAGRAM for its runtime. Gothic organ rounds out a few tracks and gives a classic creepy vibe. Definitely not punk (several of these tracks clock in near the five-minute mark and test my need for speed and brevity), but if you're an old school metalhead, this is worth checking out.

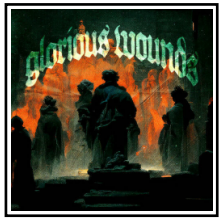
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Doomentia / Insane Society

GLANDS – Generic Waste cassette

Two-piece hardcore punk outfit from Rome. The songs are as ripping as the mastermind behind the project is self-deprecating. An absolutely relentless barrage of feedback amidst the four catchy songs. From what I can gather, this is a solo recording project with a drummer who also does the engineering of the recordings. Very cool. Not sure if GLANDS is a live project, but if you ask me, it sure should be.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: XTRO

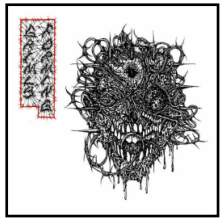
GLORIOUS WOUNDS – Glorious Wounds cassette



Hardcore punk project coming from Providence, with deep, melodic 'core roots merging with breakdowns from time to time. Sufficient execution, with deep, guttural vocals that are on point, and yet most tracks sound and feel like they are the very same (perhaps melodic hardcore all sounds the same to me), with a formula of steady, fast cadences, followed by an impasse or breakdown, and then some soft vocals giving entrance to guttural screamo again and again. A good ball of sound, but perhaps less repetition could help.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Tor Johnson

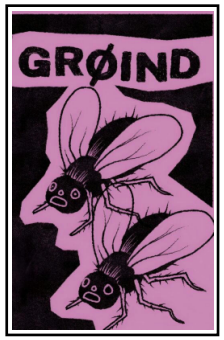
GRIMLY FORMING / ROLEX – split LP



Killer split by two great L.A. bands. This is the first that I have heard from GRIMLY FORMING since the band's '22 release. They had this song on there called "Killing Spree" that was stupid good. Well, shit! Guess what? It's on this pressing also! GRIMLY FORMING is in peak form on each of the ten tracks. The band loses zero velocity and is a relentless horror hammer of a band to listen to. Perfect. ROLEX was a band that I had not heard yet, but am going to learn to love a lot! They combine a ratio of CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS and SACCHARINE TRUST in a way that could easily be amongst the glorious SST roster of '82. "Let's Get Away With It" is probably one of my favorite songs of the fucking year!! *Buy.*

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: 11 PM

GROIND – Keep It Clean cassette



Applying gnarly affectations over a solid rock'n'roll core, Oxnard's GROIND serves us an agreeable mash-up of styles on their debut tape, the sound of which is certainly more user-friendly than the hodgepodge of the words "groin" and "grind" that they've chosen as a moniker. Though nasty in their distorted execution, these seven tunes are really old-fashioned head-bobbers armed with some soulful guitar. They even dip into '50s-style balladeering on the closing "Status Quo," and overall, it's a solid introduction to the group that's worth checking out.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: XTRO

GUERRA FINAL – Purgatorio EP

GUERRA FINAL emerges from the heart of Texas's burgeoning punk scene with a raw, electrifying energy that is as raucous as it is intense. Their second EP *Purgatorio* combines aggressive outbursts with catchy hooks, creating a dynamic and addicting mixture. GUERRA FINAL blends POISON IDEA-like guitar riffs, with frenetic drumming

and the songwriting sensibility of Burning Spirits-styled bands. Each track pulsates with a relentless rhythm and undisputed attitude. In a punk landscape often crowded with formulaic bands, GUERRA FINAL stands out as a fresh fix ready to take the genre back to its roots. Keep an eye on these punks—they're just getting started.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Desolate

HALF HUMAN – Shape Language LP

Third full-length from the Brooklyn-based trio HALF HUMAN. Experimental, angular, and dissonant might take a crack at describing the rhythms and riffs within *Shape Language*, while bolstering a full-force sound. Nothing about this is sparse or bare: bass lines run a marathon up and down the fretboard, the guitar incessantly jabs and gets hung up on odd notes, the drums kerrattle and slap across the kit in an industrial fashion, vocals find a melody hanging in the balance, somehow shouting for order. These ten tracks feel like a chaos incantation. First blush with this busy, disparate, noisy thing didn't land well with me, but listening through a few times, I came to appreciate the sonic mess as a whole, each element clamoring for attention, shuffling and weaseling around one another. A rollicking, atonal, post-hardcore love letter. For a good taste, check out "Hiccup."

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released

HARD PASS – Hardcore 2024 cassette

Another crusher from Sweden, where seemingly 90% or so of the world's best hardcore punk originates. HARD PASS has a massive sound that falls somewhere in the realm of well-produced D-beat, with comparisons drawn to DISRUPT and TOTALITÄR. Special shoutout to their rhythm section; the bass lines are fat and the drumming is scorching. While each song here is a certified ripper, "Welcomed Hell" stands out with a couple of unexpected tempo changes that sees the band shift from mind-melting speed to mid-tempo riffing. Overall, a masterclass of the style that deserves a listen from anyone who likes heavy shit.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released

HITS – World of Dirt LP

HITS is an artsy, post-punk-leaning bedroom pop outfit that's been going for about a decade now, centered around the songwriting of Jen Weisberg and with contributions from drummer Brian Tester and bassist/sax dude Max Nordile (PREENING, VIOLENCE CREEPS, and a billion other Bay Area bands). They originally hailed from Oakland, but some cryptic Bandcamp copy seems to suggest at least one of them has moved, turning the band into a long-distance recording project. It's fitting, as *World of Dirt* is the sound of no place in particular. The eight tracks on the album are a bit of a sonic grab-bag covering various DIY scenes. Some songs wed the primitive, stumbling melodicism of the RAINCOATS to a distinctly American brand of indie pop, resulting in something that sounds like a detuned, lower-fi SOFTIES. Others use GALAXIE 500-esque shimmery guitar—or sax!—drone to fill the cavernous space carved out by YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS-y minimal post-punk tunes. There are even a couple of tracks that get close to the improvised industrial squall of early NURSE WITH WOUND. It's an album that is as pleasant as it is challenging, featuring genuine songwriting that engages with its influences just the right amount. A real breath of fresh air in a year that's felt full of cynical, stale bullshit.

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Paisley Shirt

HOMEMADE SPEED – Faster is Better EP

Fast and fiery spirit-of-'82 hardcore here from the ripping HOMEMADE SPEED outta Norfolk. It opens up with an instrumental that sounds like the Earl Liberty/Chuck Biscuits-era CIRCLE JERKS warming up before a set, and after that it's just incredible mean and rabid shit, intense as fuck all the way through. Twisting and menacing riffs and machine gun drums. Killer and catchy, it's instant classic material, stacked with hits.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Not For The Weak

HOSPITAL TERRORIZER – Before You I Have No Other Justification for Myself Than an Animal Caught Growling in a Trap cassette

Bewildering mix of neon-coated blastbeats, chiptunes, and vibrating punk energy from this Las Vegas-based project. Each short track is an aural assault that mixes the wildest hysterics of XIU XIU, the drum machine grindcore of early AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED, and the psychedelic pounding of LIGHTNING BOLT, held together with breakcore glue. For the right audience at the right time, it's kind of awesome. Every so often, candy-coated grenades of ecstatic beauty seep through, like on the garage punk vocals of "I Didn't Think When I Started a Diary." The tape is a chaotic, messy affair with 32 tracks, including titles like, "Weekly Crisis: This Time He Was Caught With Mouthfuls of Doll Hairs in His Sister's Room," and "10 Variations of Peter Sotos are in Your Scene." The flow can be disorienting, but if you aren't feeling the blasted-open groove of a particular track, you can just wait 45 seconds until the next one.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Knuckles on Stun

INDIKATOR B – B.N.J. EP

Well-executed UK82-ish hardcore from Croatia's INDIKATOR B. After switching their lineup since their first release, the band sounds very tight and isn't just banging these songs out; there is nuance and melody oozing from this EP. Great vocals that aren't the usual bark, and catchy riffs that will have you going back for a second listen the moment the final track ends. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Doomtown

JUPITER HEARTS – All That Pain You Left Behind 12″

Second release from the Charlotte, NC group JUPITER HEARTS. Rob Pennington (ENDPOINT, BTGOG, BLACK CROSS, BLACK GOD), Charles Wood (BROKEN HEARTS ARE BLUE), Tim Kriependorf (TRIPLE THREAT, the LIVING MEMORIES), and Scott Wishart (LATE BLOOMER, SCOUT) present six tracks in the '80s post-hardcore vein, with a psych-rock guitar tone playing equal lead to mid-range shouts. Instrumentals are tight, with plenty of flowing riffs punctuated by halting, cymbal-grabbing rests and frenetic drum fills. Guitars and vocals remind me of the groups KARMA TO BURN (but faster) and YEAR LONG DISASTER, respectively. Lyrics run from personal on the opener "Has Something Changed" to political on "Two If By Sea," and are all met with a downtrodden yet aggressive stance. Catchy riffs galore.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Simba

KORIDOR – Kroz Pukotine LP

This is a dark, driving album. A little hardcore, a lot of dark post-punk. Love how the guitar seems to weave all the instruments together into an epic-sounding album. To my ears, it sounds like RUDIMENTARY PENI and KILLING JOKE took their first albums and modernized everything by adding influences from a few current bands. What we end up with is a dark but pleasant album to listen to, one that seems to grow on me. I like it more and more with every listen. This band is not a one-trick pony, every song sounds different and this record is quite special. Great album!

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Doomtown

LEAKING HEAD – Play That Fuckin' Track cassette

Freaked-out and fuzzy hardcore punk from Rochester. This tape from LEAKING HEAD is unhinged and wild, featuring eight tracks that make for a chaotically cohesive listen. Citing inspiration from Cleveland legends H100s and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS, this is similar in spirit but far murkier and mutated, which is a good thing as far as I'm concerned. No single track recommendations here; listen to the whole thing to best experience LEAKING HEAD.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Tetryon Tapes